



DFCS LEADERSHIP:

Bobby Cagle
Interim Director

Katie Jo Ballard
Interim Deputy Director

Carol Christopher
Deputy Director

► Child in immediate
danger, please call 911!

► Call 1-855-GACHILD
(1-855-422-4453) to make
a CPS Report!

Apply for Food Stamps,
Childcare and Medicaid:
www.compass.ga.gov

Renew Your Benefits:
www.compass.ga.gov

DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES

The primary goal of the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) is to assist and support families to ensure children are safe from abuse, and families can become more self-sufficient.

DFCS is made up of two primary bodies of work: Child Welfare and the Office of Family Independence (OFI). Child Welfare encompasses Child Protective Services (CPS), Adoptions and Foster Care. The Office of Family Independence oversees Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF), Food Stamps, Medicaid and other self-sufficiency and family support activities. The division has nearly 7,000 staff members. In SFY 2014, the division's budget was over \$1.1 billion, including \$322 million in state funds.

Social Services / Child Welfare

Case managers, located in 159 county DFCS offices, provide a wide variety of social services – including: family assessment services, child protective services (CPS) to abused and neglected children, treatment services to families involved with CPS, recruitment, placement and treatment services for children in foster care including location of adoptive homes when parental rights have been terminated.

In SFY 2014:

- Child Protective Services workers investigated 33,221 reports of child maltreatment.
- 906 adoptions were finalized.
- At the end of SFY 2014 there were 8,620 children in foster care.

Since December 31, 2004 all case managers and supervisors are required to be certified in either CPS or Foster Care. New staff must undergo an initial assessment and complete an eight-week integrated classroom and field assessment program. The certification program requires the new employee to work under the direction of a mentor who signs off on various activities and competencies once each has been accomplished. To retain certification, staff must take 20 hours of continuing education annually.

Office of Family Independence (OFI)

The Office of Family Independence refers to all eligibility programs including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - formerly referred to as Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Family Medicaid, Aged, Blind and Disabled Medicaid (ABD) and Child Care. All OFI programs have an income-eligible component as well as other eligibility criteria such as an age requirement.

In SFY 2014

- TANF benefits totaled more than \$40.4 million. A monthly average of 37,261 Georgians received TANF, totaling over 16,237 cases. Of these, 47 percent were children; the others were their adult caregivers.
- An average of 2,848 TANF recipients received employment services every month.
- There were approximately 1.2 million receiving Medicaid each month.

- SNAP benefits worth over 2.8 billion were issued.
- Twenty community action agencies and four local governments received about \$16.1 million in federal funds to provide job skills training, transportation, housing and food.
- The Energy Assistance Program distributed \$67.7 million to 181,018 low-income households to help pay their home heating costs.

Adoption

The Adoption Unit is committed to educating the public, private partners and DFCS field staff in regards to best practices in adoption and to facilitate and support the adoption of children in the permanent custody of DFCS. Recognizing that children deserve safe, loving and nurturing relationships with permanent families, DFCS and its partners will provide a continuum of available, accessible and effective services that enable and support the placement of children in adoptive families.

After School Services

Youth development practices delivered in afterschool and summer programs play a vital role in motivating youth to achieve success not only in schools, but in their personal lives as well. To address these needs, DFCS funds afterschool and summer programs across the state of Georgia for youth ages 6 - 19 through two solicitation processes: a Request for Proposal (RFP) and Statement of Need (SON).

Child Protective Services

Child Protective Services (CPS) staff complete an assessment of a family based on reports of child abuse or neglect and provide services to protect the child and strengthen the family.

Emergency Food Assistance

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low income persons in Georgia, including the elderly, by providing them with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost. In accordance with Federal law and U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

Energy Assistance

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) has limited funds available to pay for home heating and cooling costs for low-income eligible families. The program has three components:

1. Energy Crisis - Provided to low income households with disconnection notices or already disconnected.
2. Regular Home Energy Assistance - Provides financial assistance to households meeting certain income and other requirements.
3. Weatherization - Provides low-cost home energy conservation improvements to eligible households.

Applications for all energy assistance programs can be made through a local Community Action Agency or non-profit organization. The assistance is available in all 159 counties in Georgia.

The general public cannot apply for Regular Energy Assistance until the first of December each year. A listing of Community Action Agencies can be found at: www.georgiacaa.org

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps, provides monthly benefits to low-income households to help pay for the cost of food. A household may be one person living alone, a family, or several unrelated individuals living together who routinely purchase and prepare meals together. Anyone may apply for food stamp benefits. The program helps households who have limited income and resources. Georgians are now able to apply for food stamps online via COMPASS at www.compass.ga.gov.

Family Medicaid

Family Medicaid is a program that provides health care coverage benefits to individuals that meet the requirements for income, resources and citizenship. Individuals may apply for Medicaid online at www.compass.ga.gov, at any local DFCS office, by mail, telephone, fax, e-mail, or at designated partner agencies.

Aged, Blind and Disabled Medicaid

Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) Medicaid in Georgia serves persons who are 65 years of age or older, legally blind or totally disabled. There are 19 different coverage categories, known as classes of assistance (COA), for the ABD population.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), often referred to as welfare, is the monthly cash assistance program for low income families with children under age 18. Cooperation with Division of Child Support Services is a requirement of receiving TANF benefits. In order to be determined eligible to receive TANF benefits, a child under 18 must reside in the home and must be deprived of the care of at least one parent due to a variety of reasons including: continued absence from the home, death of the parent, physical or mental incapacity or if one parent has a recent connection to the work force (if both parents are residing in the home). TANF is a program intended to prepare adult recipients for employment. There is work requirement for adults who are able to work and receive TANF. Individuals may apply for TANF at any local DFCS office or by mail.

Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)

The Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program subsidizes the cost of child care to help low income families afford safe quality child care. The CAPS program provides subsidies directly to child care providers selected by eligible families. Individuals may apply for CAPS online at www.compass.ga.gov.